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Aide may have to testify in Casey's stead

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Surgeons who removed a cancerous brain tumor from CIA Director William Casey expect him to "resume his normal activities" — while a former CIA chief said the probe of the Iran-contra affair can survive Casey's temporary absence.

After five hours of surgery at Georgetown University Hospital in Washington, D.C., surgeons said a preliminary examination of the tumor revealed a "lymphoma (a cancerous growth) which appears treatable."

Former CIA Director Stansfield Turner said Casey's illness should not bar him from testifying for House and Senate investigators in the future: "It might have to be in a hospital rather

than in a congressional briefing room."

Investigators, in the meantime, could call Casey's deputy, Robert Gates, who is running the agency in the spy chief's absence, Turner said. Gates would probably already know "a good deal" of what Casey knows about the Iran arms deal, Turner said.

NBC News, quoting senior U.S. officials, reported Casey's wife does not want him to return to the agency.

One big difference if Casey departs: The CIA may no longer enjoy the close relationship with President Reagan that was provided by Casey, 73, Reagan's 1980 campaign manager.

Casey's surgeons were not forthcoming with details on the surgery, but experts not connected with the case said the type of tumor is rare, but generally receptive to treatment.

Dr. Henry Brem, director of neuro-

surgical oncology at Baltimore's Johns Hopkins University Hospital, said brain lymphomas often are sensitive to radiation or drug therapy, some "just melt away under treatment."

Casey suffered two mild brain seizures this week, which doctors say are often the first signals of brain tumors in an otherwise healthy person.

But Dr. Victor Levin, professor of neuro-oncology at the University of California Medical School, San Francisco, said depending on where the tumor is located, Casey's memory could have been affected by the tumor.

Casey testified twice last week in private sessions with House members probing the scandal, but was admitted to the hospital shortly before he was to appear before a Senate panel.

CIA director's career

William Casey, CIA director since 1981, rose to power and wealth from Wall Street. A look at his background:

■ A lawyer, first worked in GOP politics in the 1940s.

■ Made a small fortune as a Wall Street lawyer, co-founder of Capital Cities Communications, owner of ABC.

■ Appointed by President Nixon as chairman of Securities and Exchange Commission. Appointed by President Ford to chair U.S. Export-Import Bank.

■ He and his wife, Mary, have been married for 30 years.

■ Recommended by Ronald Reagan as director of CIA and White House chief of staff.